

BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD

FEBRUARY 1, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

A virtual meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Monday, February 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

School Board Members Participating: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman
Karen Jew, Secretary
Rebecca Howie
Alison Marsano

School Board Members Absent:

Also Participating: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis, and in accordance with Governor Sununu's [Emergency Order #12](#) pursuant to [Executive Order 2020-04](#), this Board is authorized to meet electronically. As stated on the agenda, the meeting was aired live via [Zoom](#) (Meeting ID: 977 3548 2740 Passcode: Ytdc75).

Each member of the Board was asked to state, for the record, where they were, why their attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with them, and whether or not they were able to hear the proceedings.

Erin Sarris

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Karen Jew

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Rebecca Howie

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Alison Marsano

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Kenneth Haag

Stated he was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, he was alone in the room he was in, and could hear the proceedings.

RECESS

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO THAT THE BOARD RECESS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE INFORMATION SESSION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board recessed at 6:32 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 8:25 p.m.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the two citizens petition warrant articles

Article 10 - Petition Warrant Article K to 8 Feasibility Study

Shall we direct the Brookline School Board to convene a study committee investigating the feasibility and suitability of expanding responsibility of the Brookline School District to grades K to 8, with the committee consisting of a School Board member, Selectboard member, Finance Committee member, and two members of the public, reporting findings by November 3, 2021?

MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 10

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chair Sarris remarked she is always open to new perspectives on our schools, and appreciates the effort that has gone into this. She also appreciates the optimism and faith in Brookline and what we can do for our students. Some of the issues such as the Cost Per Pupil (CPP) and SAU efficiency would not necessarily be resolved by this particular move. A lot of the changes in CPP are the result of things outside of local control, e.g., State Aid, healthcare, retirement. Those are significant drivers in what has changed since 2007.

She does not think that could be impacted by this. There might be a time to study some of these things, but for her, at this time, the priorities are how we will deal with the aftermath of the issues our students are having due to COVID-19.

Member Jew stated a need to prioritize the infrastructure needs at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS). She spoke of those who moved to town because they like the system that is in place and how things are working. She is not certain how much support there is for something like this.

Member Marsano stated appreciation for the different perspective. However, if duplicating something that already exists, you will automatically create a cost increase. She noted it is in 7th and 8th grade where students start differentiating courses, leveling classes, etc. Given the number of teachers that we would have to call in just to create the same opportunities that our students currently have with the COOP, she would not expect the result to be a cost savings.

She spoke of her focus on the work needed at RMMS. We need to study how to increase efficiency there and save money there in the long run. She believes that to be a better study area to identify financial efficiencies. We need to look at the social emotional needs of our students, how to get them through the recovery of this pandemic, and how we can support them going forward.

Chairman Haag remarked, during his time on the Board, there have been two studies conducted concerning the dissolution of the COOP. Both studies came back against it citing extra-curriculars and opportunities for students. He spoke of concern with the socio-emotional piece. He agrees with all comments made around the pandemic, but even in a non-COVID environment, that is an opportunity for students to start branching out their networks, to meet new friends. That is part of the maturation process.

In regard to absorption, the cost spread would be limited. You would, in a sense, be paying more for that same model and creating inefficiencies. The cost model certainly plays into why it is good, but there are unanticipated expenses that come into play. Numbers aside, the previous studies spoke to him of why the dissolution of the COOP does not make sense.

The constituents he talks with moved here for the school system, and by breaking that up, we are breaking a promise.

Member Howie stated agreement with the remarks made. She too believes that having the students merge with Hollis students in the 7th and 8th grade is beneficial.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: 0
Nay: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano. Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5

MOTION FAILED

Article 11 – Petition Warrant Article – Tax Impact Notation

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5 V-b, requiring that the annual budget and all special warrant articles having a tax impact, as determined by the school board, shall contain a notation stating the estimated tax impact of the article: The determination of the estimated tax impact shall be subject to approval by the governing body.

MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 11
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Sarris stated she would like to take this up as a Board rather than see it as a Warrant Article. She would like the opportunity for the Board to have this conversation, and decide to put it on the warrant as a Board.

Member Jew remarked her concern with the SB2 structure is in educating the voters. If you are not in attendance at the Deliberative Session you don't receive the background information on the items you are asked to vote on. By putting the information in the presentation you provide the transparency piece. She is concerned with voting occurring based on the number alone; absent the understanding of how the number was derived.

Member Marsano stated agreement. She has no concern with including the information on the ballot, and would like to see the Town include information on tax impacts as well.

It was noted that the same tax impact question is on the warrant for the Brookline School District, Town of Brookline, and the COOP School District.

Chairman Haag likes the idea of transparency where applicable, and is supportive of the article.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alison Marsano, Kenneth Haag	2
Nay: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Erin Sarris	3

MOTION FAILED

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO ADJOURN
SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano. Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag	5
Nay:	0

MOTION CARRIED

The February 1, 2021 virtual meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____